

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Arlington Department of Health and Human Services ("HHS") is the Department that oversees the Health Department, Council on Aging, Youth Counseling Center, and the Veterans' Services Department. HHS also coordinates the activities of the following boards and commissions: Board of Health, Board of Youth Services, Council on Aging, Disability Commission, and the Human Rights Commission. Additionally, the HHS manages the Food Pantry, Widows Trust Fund Commission, Youth Health and Safety Coalition, and the Health and Human Services Charitable Corporation.

The mission of the Department of Health and Human Services is to protect the health of the public and assist residents with accessing services to meet basic human needs.



BOARD OF HEALTH

The three-member Board of Health meets on a regular basis. At the meetings, environmental health concerns are addressed, public hearings are held, and policy review is performed. The Board of Health met six times in 2016 and conducted the following hearings: one food code variance request, one keeping-of-hens permit request, one swimming pool variance request, one housing code violation, and seven Tobacco/Nicotine Delivery Product Sales violations. The Board granted one food-code variance request, one keeping-of-hens permit, and one swimming pool variance request. In addition, the Board voted to sustain an order to correct housing code violations and issued seven, seven-day suspensions to establishments who had sold tobacco/nicotine delivery products to a person under twenty-one years of age. In June 2016 the Board adopted regulations to Restrict the Sale of Medical Marijuana in Arlington.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

The Health Department is located at 27 Maple Street in the Arlington Senior Center, located behind Town Hall. The Board of Health is required by State statutes and regulations to perform many duties relative to the protection of public health and safety, the control of disease, the promotion of safe and sanitary living conditions, and the protection of the environment from

damage and pollution. These mandated requirements are fulfilled by environmental health and public health nursing staff within the Health Department.



Health Compliance Officer checks water temperature to ensure sanitary code compliance

Environmental Health Permitting and Inspections

Staff annually permits and regularly inspects restaurants, tobacco retailers, tanning establishments, body art establishments, swimming pools, chicken coops, camps, the ice-skating rink, and three bathing beaches. Inspectors from the Department also investigate numerous resident complaints related to any health issue within the community, ranging from trash and dumpster complaints to housing code violations, pest activity, as well as noise and odor concerns. In 2016 the environmental health division was comprised of two full time inspectors and a full time Public Health Associate from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Department also contracts with three food safety consultants to conduct a portion of mandated food establishment inspections.

The Department saw a significant number of changes in 2016 with the vacancy of one full-time inspector, the departure of one contract food inspector in September, and the expiration of the CDC Public Health Associate grant position in October. Despite these changes, the Department worked diligently to apply for grants, conduct mandated inspections, and continue to work closely with other Town Agencies to address public health issues in the community.

Tobacco Control

In 2016 staff conducted thirty-eight tobacco/nicotine delivery product compliance checks, which resulted in seven product sales violations. Each establishment was issued a \$100.00 fine and was required to serve a seven-day suspension of their permit to sell Tobacco and Nicotine Delivery Products.

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Keeping of Hens

The Health Department is charged with enforcing the Keeping of Hens/Poultry Bylaw. Any resident who wishes to keep hens as pets or for the purposes of home egg production, gardening, or similar purposes must obtain a Permit to Keep Hens from the Board of Health. In 2016 the Department reviewed one application and granted one new permit. The Health Department renewed twelve existing permits and conducted nineteen inspections of hen coop/pens.

Permit Issued	2013	2014	2015	2016
Food	366	357	365	341
Tobacco	25	20	19	19
Waste Hauler	13	15	16	18
Funeral Director	4	8	9	8
Tanning Establishment	1	1	1	1
Public Pool	8	9	7	8
Public Beach	3	3	3	3
Ice Rink	1	1	1	1
Keeping of Hens	6	8	12	13
Camps	3	6	7	6
Body Art Establishment	1	1	1	1
Body Art Practitioner	2	2	2	2
Bodywork Establishment **	3	0	0	0
Bodywork Therapist **	1	0	0	0
Total	437	431	443	421

**Bodywork regulations were implemented on November 1, 2013

Inspection Type	2013	2014	2015	2016
Food Establishment	716	642	549	490
Tobacco Compliance Check	68	58	38	38
Housing	180	205	220	185
Demolition Inspection	11	17	27	18
Nuisance Inspection	256	297	318	609
Keeping of Hens	9	12	12	19
Bodywork Establishment	20	10	10	4
Total	1,260	1,241	1,174	1,363

Swimming Pools

There are eight semi-public swimming pools in the Town of Arlington that are inspected annually by the Department to ensure compliance with 105 CMR 435.000: Minimum Standards for Swimming Pools (State Sanitary Code: Chapter V). The seven outdoor swimming pools, located at various apartment buildings in Town and the Winchester Country Club, are inspected in

the spring/early summer prior to opening for the season. The Arlington Boys and Girls Club, the only indoor semi-public pool in the Town, is open year round.

In 2016 the Department received an inquiry from a business interested in opening a float tank therapy spa in Arlington. Despite the Board's approval to grant a variance from certain requirements of the Code, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) denied their variance. Therefore, the business was unable to pursue their plans to open in Arlington. Currently, a representative from the Department is working with MDPH to review these types of businesses and create applicable regulations for Float Tanks and other similar therapeutic spas.

Recreational Camps for Children

The Department issued six recreational camp permits in 2016 and inspected each camp to ensure compliance with the minimum housing, health, safety, and sanitary protections for children in the care of camps that operate in the Town of Arlington. Food Protection

In accordance with 105 CMR 590.000: Minimum Sanitation Standards for Food Establishments, the Health Department is required, as the regulatory authority, to enforce the provisions of this code. The purpose of this code is to safeguard public health and provide consumers food that is safe, unadulterated, and honestly presented. This code establishes definitions, sets standards for management and personnel, food operations, and equipment facilities, and provides for food establishment plan review, permit issuance, inspection, employee restriction, and permit suspension.

The Department assigns each food establishment a risk-based category. A food establishment that sells packaged food, such as a convenience store, is considered low risk and assigned to a category one, which correlates to one inspection per year. A food establishment that serves food to a highly susceptible population, such as a nursing home, is considered high risk and assigned to a category four which correlates to four inspections per year.

In 2016 the Department issued 183 food establishment permits and conducted 420 routine and follow-up food inspections. Additionally, the Department issued 156 temporary food establishment permits, including the Farmers Market permits, and inspected seventy-eight temporary food vendors, including those at events such as the Feast of the East, Greek Festival, Farmer's Market, Town Day and other various public events throughout the year.

The Department also investigated four food complaints and held one administrative meeting to discuss food safety. The Board heard testimony from one establishment applying and receiving approval for a variance from the 105 CMR 590.000. Fourteen new food establishments opened or changed ownership, including two residential kitchens, and nine establishments closed.

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Type of Food Permits Issued	2013	2014	2015	2016
Food Establishment Permits	181	187	187	183
Mobile Food Permits	3	3	1	2
Residential Kitchen Permits	11	15	14	11
Farmers Market Permits	13	14	15	11
Temporary Event Food Permit	158	138	148	134

Housing

The Department conducted 185 inspections of rental and owner-occupied housing units in 2016 in accordance with 105 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 410.000, Massachusetts Housing Code. When a housing inspection is requested by an occupant, an inspector conducts the inspection, cites all violations of the code, and issues a correction order to the owner of the property. Upon correction of the violations, an inspector conducts a final inspection to verify that all violations have been corrected in accordance with the Code. Violations documented in 2016 included: unsanitary living conditions, insufficient heat, water damage, leaking plumbing fixtures, lead paint determinations, and insect and rodent infestations.

The Hoarding Response Team (HRT) investigated five new hoarding cases and followed up on thirteen ongoing cases. The HRT is a collaboration between Police, Fire, and Health officials. The team consists of two health inspectors, a police officer and a clinical responder. In most cases, the team was able to work with the individuals to bring the homes into compliance without condemning the property. The Department did, however, condemn three properties due to uninhabitable conditions. The team presented to first responders at two different venues on HRT protocols.

The Department continues to work closely with the Council on Aging, Veteran Services, and Minuteman Senior Services to assist senior residents with alternate housing and services, such as cleaning and organizing.

In 2016 the Department conducted eighteen inspections of properties awaiting demolition in order to ensure the health and safety of the site. The inspection requires asbestos removal, pest control, dust control, and other control measures to protect the health of the public.

Public Health Nursing

Communicable Disease Surveillance

Below is a partial list of communicable diseases monitored by the public health nurse. For a complete list, please visit the Town's website at www.arlingtonma.gov/health.

Communicable Disease	2014	2015	2016
Babesiosis	1	4	1
Calicivirus/norovirus	--	--	1
Campylobacter Enteritis	14	11	6
Clostridium Perfringens*	1	2	0
Enterovirus	2	1	0
Giardia	4	3	5
Group A strep	3	1	3
Haemophilus influenza	0	0	1
Hepatitis B	12	12	12
Hepatitis C	35	30	10
Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis	2	1	3
Influenza	104	154	79
Invasive Bacterial Infection	0	1	0
Legionellosis	2	3	1
Lyme Disease	41	32	45
Malaria	0	0	1
Mumps	0	0	1
Pertussis	0	1	1
Salmonella	6	6	6
Shigatoxin	0	3	3
Shigellosis	1	1	0
Strep pneumonia -invasive	4	1	3
Tuberculosis <i>contact, and suspected cases in addition to probable and confirmed cases</i>	36	38	36
Varicella	7	8	2
Viral Hemorrhagic Fever (suspect contacts)	--	4	0
West Nile Virus	0	0	3
Yersiniosis	0	0	2
Total	275	317	225

-- denotes disease not tracked/present in those years

*This is the most common cause of food borne illness in the US. Lack of reported cases indicates only that persons who suffered illness were not hospitalized or were not tested.

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Weights and Measures

To ensure compliance with the Consumer and Merchant Protection Act, the Sealer of Weights and Measures conducts inspections of scales, scanners, and dispensing equipment. This includes retail stores, gas stations, oil trucks, and food establishments. The Sealer responds to all consumer complaints to ensure fairness and accuracy.

As merchants are inspected annually, compliance with standards and accuracy of merchant measuring devices has increased steadily. The Sealer of Weights and Measures determines the amount of savings by computing the amount of fuel pumped each year from a particular measuring device, such as a gas pump.

Since 2010 the Department has contracted with the Town of Belmont to provide sealing services as Belmont does not fund a sealer position. Below is a table of devices sealed in Arlington and Belmont in 2016:

Device Sealed	Arlington	Belmont
Scales 10 lbs and under	6	7
Scales 100lbs and under	118	51
Gasoline pump meters	131	104
Vehicle tank meters (heating oil trucks)	34	0
Taxi Cab Meters	17	0
Bulk heating oil tank meters	3	0
Bottle and can return dispensers	2	3
Individual Weights	0	74
Other devices	2	3
Total	313	242



Food Pantry

The Arlington Food Pantry continued its 25 year history of providing food for all Arlington residents in need. In 2016 the Food Pantry had over 3,000 visits, a 27% increase over the previous year. Volunteers distributed over 250,000 pounds of food.

Residents that visited the pantry continue to receive not only non-perishable food but also fresh produce, eggs, frozen meats, and dairy products thanks to our partners from the Greater Boston Food Bank, Food Link, and Boston Area Gleaners. Additionally, the Food Pantry received over 3,000 bags of nonperishable donations from Arlington's very generous community.

The Board of Directors adopted a new logo and mission statement for the Food Pantry. The new mission states: the Arlington Food Pantry is dedicated to



Food Pantry volunteers prepare Thanksgiving packages.

eliminating food insecurity by providing nutritious and culturally appropriate food in a respectful and compassionate manner to any Arlington resident in need. The Food Pantry is grateful for the generous community, which provides the necessary funding, food, and volunteer power to ensure that no Arlington resident goes hungry.

BOARD OF YOUTH SERVICES

ARLINGTON YOUTH COUNSELING CENTER (AYCC)



The Arlington Youth Counseling Center (AYCC) is a community-based, licensed mental health counseling center. Its mission is to promote and support the social and emotional wellbeing of all Arlington's youth and families, regardless of their ability to pay. AYCC provides a variety of high quality, innovative, and therapeutic outpatient and school-based mental health services, including individual, group, and family counseling, psychiatric evaluation and consultation, and medication management. Through local grants and other fundraising initiatives, AYCC also provides case management services to residents with basic resource needs (housing, food, fuel assistance, health insurance coverage etc.), and oversees the First Step Group and other support services for survivors of domestic violence.

AYCC's clinical team includes a child and adolescent psychiatrist and psychiatric clinical nurse specialist, a psychologist, two Licensed Independent Clinical Social Workers (LICSW) serving as Clinical Director and Assistant Clinical Director, sixteen licensed fee-for-service clinicians, and an LICSW serving as the Domestic Violence and Community Resource Specialist. AYCC collaborates extensively with the schools, other town departments, and local, youth-serving agencies to ensure that the organization is fully integrated into the

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community and responsive to the mental and behavioral health needs of Arlington's youth and families.

In 2016 AYCC provided more than 5,500 counseling and medication therapy sessions to over 350 youth and families. To keep pace with the demand for mental health services, AYCC has continued to expand its clinical presence in the schools while also maximizing the physical space and clinical capacity of the center during the day time and after school hours. AYCC has continued to strengthen and refine billing procedures, reduce late submissions for insurance reauthorizations, and increase consistent collection of copayments. As a result, AYCC has seen continued revenue growth in 2016, generating \$306,398 in insurance reimbursements and \$74,375 in client copayments, up from \$271,225 and \$52,737, respectively in 2015.



Team AYCC raised over \$12,000 at the Cause + Event 5k in May

2016 AYCC Highlights

- AYCC continued to run several successful groups in the schools and at AYCC, including two stress management groups at the High School, and three groups at the Ottoson Middle School—two for students with anxiety and depression, and a social skills group for students on the autism spectrum. AYCC clinicians also developed two new groups at AYCC, one for parents of substance-involved teens, and a Dialectical Behavior Therapy group for adolescent girls. AYCC clinicians dedicate many hours to developing, planning and running therapeutic groups.
- AYCC continued to prioritize professional development among its staff, organizing monthly case conferences and offering a number of clinical trainings, including some on the following topics: the Children's Behavioral Health Initiative and Wraparound Services; Mindfulness in Therapy; Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT); the Assessment and Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders, Clinical Competency in Working with Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Adolescents and Their Families; Anxiety Disorders in Children

and Adolescents; and Decisions and Directions in Child and Family Treatment: An Exploration of Options for Promoting Growth, Change, and Healing.

- AYCC and members of the Board of Youth Services organized a team of nearly twenty runners and walkers to participate in the Cause + Event Boston 5k fundraiser, and successfully raised over \$12,000. The event was both a fundraiser as well as an opportunity to promote awareness about AYCC among the hundreds of other race participants and supporters on the streets.
- AYCC staff collaborated with the Board of Youth Services (BYS) to host an open house for community members interested in learning more about the programs and services offered by the agency. Over thirty community members joined AYCC staff and BYS members for a meet and greet, refreshments, and tours of the Whittemore Robbins House.
- AYCC received \$33,000 in year two of a three year Cummings Grant to support school-based counseling and mental health consultation in all seven Arlington elementary schools. Through the Cummings Grant, AYCC expanded its in-school services in 2016 to include individual counseling for students at Ottoson Middle School.
- AYCC collaborated with the Arlington Public Schools and AYCC Psychiatrist, Dr. Dan Geller, to offer a parent forum on anxiety disorders in children and adolescents. The forum, which was held at Ottoson Middle School, was well attended and well received by over fifty parents.
- For a third year, AYCC received critical funding from the State to support its mission, and to help offset the cost of providing mental health services to the community. AYCC is deeply grateful to our state legislators, Senator Donnelly, Representative Garballey, and Representative Rogers, and their incredible staff, for advocating on behalf of AYCC for this much needed funding.



The First Step Program and True Story Theater offered an interactive workshop titled "Toxic Relationships" in October

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- With funding support from High Rock Church, AYCC provided case management services to forty-eight individuals and families from Arlington, helping to connect them to food, housing, and other financial resources.
- Through the First Step domestic violence program, AYCC conducted outreach to forty individuals, and worked intensively with ten survivors. In addition, First Step organized two outreach and educational events during the year—a tent at Town Day, and a community forum with True Story Theater. The latter provided an interactive theater experience focused on how to offer support to someone who is, or might be experiencing domestic violence. First Step is currently working on outreach to adolescents regarding teen dating violence in hopes of increasing early identification of abusive behaviors in dating relationships.
- In collaboration with the Board of Youth Services, and with the support of generous community members, individual donors, and business sponsors, AYCC raised over \$65,000 in 2016. The 6th Annual Out on the Town gala was a tremendous success, raising \$30,000, and featuring former senior advisor to President Barack Obama, and renowned CNN commentator, media strategist, and best-selling author, David Axelrod.



Board of Youth Services at the 6th Annual Out on the Town Gala featuring guest speaker, David Axelrod.

tives from the public sector (police, schools, healthcare, local government) and private agencies (churches, businesses, youth-serving organizations), as well as parents and youth. Employing a public health approach to prevention and intervention, AYHSC focuses on population level change through education, environmental initiatives, policy development, and improving youth access to treatment.



AYHSC receives national award at CADCA conference in February 2016.

The past year marked year seven of the ten-year federal Drug Free Communities Program (DFC) grant. AYHSC also received grant funding from the Sanborn Foundation and Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Substance Abuse Services. The Coalition provided 4,031 hours of substance abuse prevention services, distributed more than 110 types of media (439,000 views in print and online), implemented nine significant programs and policies within the Arlington community, and generated \$52,000 in cash, volunteer, and in-kind resources from Arlington Public Schools (APS), Arlington Police Department (APD), Arlington Department of Health & Human Services, and Arlington Recreation. Coalition members and community partners volunteered their time to plan, implement and evaluate youth substance use prevention activities, which are highlighted below.

2016 Coalition Highlights

- Awarded the 2016 CADCA Chairman's Award (of 170 applicants) in recognition of exemplary demonstration and application of core competencies and essential processes of effective community problem solving.
- Administered the 2016 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) at Arlington High School.
- Partnered with the APD to conduct regular alcohol retail compliance checks, host the DEA's National Drug Take-Back Initiative, and monitor the 24-hour APD drug disposal kiosk.
- Conducted four five-week series of Guiding Good Choices workshops, a parenting program to improve family management and communication, and reduce risk factors for youth substance abuse.
- Administered the 2016 AYHSC Parent

ARLINGTON YOUTH HEALTH & SAFETY COALITION



Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition (AYHSC) is a federally funded community-based coalition whose mission is to prevent and reduce substance abuse and other risk behaviors that adversely affect youth in Arlington. The Coalition includes representa-

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HRC campers watch demonstration by Officer Mike Hogan and K9 Dasty.

Survey to 589 Arlington parents to provide information about youth use rates, measure parent perception of youth harm in using substances, and gauge parent support of Arlington laws concerning substance abuse.

- Created Ottoson Cares About Prevention (OCAP), an official substance use prevention club at the Ottoson Middle School.
- Hosted the 7th annual HRC (Health, Recreation, & Community Safety) Summer Experience in collaboration with Arlington Recreation, APD and Arlington Fire. 131 campers aged four through twelve attended the three-day camp. Activities this year included a lesson on cyber safety from APD, a tour of the AFD fire station, recreation/sports, and a substance abuse prevention magic show.
- Hosted a booth at the annual 2016 Arlington Town Day, where Coalition members provided information to Arlington residents about Coalition activities, and positive social norms at OMS and AHS.
- Coordinated SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) at the Ottoson Middle School, in which 402 seventh grade students were screened for risk of substance use disorder.
- AHS's Club 84 anti-tobacco student club participated in the national Great American Smoke Out day, attended the annual Kick Butts Day at MA State House, and was honored as the #1 club in the State for their prevention activities.
- Hosted two APS Parent Forums: "The Real Truth: Busting the Myths of Substance Use – An Interactive Presentation of Results of the 2016 Arlington YRBS" and "Under Construction: What Everyone Must Know about Tween & Teen Brain Development" by Dr. Potee.
- Collaborated with APS school committee to develop a new APS District substance abuse prevention policy.
- Coordinated a Youth Mental Health First

Aid Training for 20 APS school nurses and social workers to learn how to appropriately respond to youth who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

- Advocated for the Arlington Board of Health to pass regulations to restrict the sale of medical marijuana dispensaries in Arlington in order to prevent misuse among youth.
- Hosted the AYHSC 10-Year Celebration event to celebrate the success of the work of the AYHSC over the past 10 years since it was founded in 2006.

COUNCIL ON AGING



The growing number of those 60 years and older in Arlington is nearing 11,000¹. With approximately 26% of the total population in Arlington 60 years and older, Arlington like many communities, faces a constant challenge to identify and address the needs of this age cohort and to create an age friendly community. The goal of the Council on Aging and the Town will continue to focus on the qualities allowing our residents to age in place.

The Arlington Council on Aging (COA), a division of the Department of Health & Human Services, primary responsibilities are, to identify the needs of Arlington's elder population, and to design, promote, and implement services and programs to address such needs. In addition, the COA coordinates existing services in the community on behalf of the senior, as well as providing various Town offices vital information factoring in the needs of the elder population making Arlington a dignified and livable community for its older community members.

The COA staff continues to serve increasing numbers of seniors and their concerned adult children regarding financial distress with housing, food, fuel costs, and rising medical related costs. The staff exhausts all resources to address these concerns; however, many needs are often unmet due to limited social services. The COA utilizes the collective staff experience in providing information leading to indirect and direct access to aging resources for seniors, their families, and community organizations in an effort to lead a dignified life in Arlington.

The COA is experiencing a surge in participation

Source: 2010 federal census and updated by the Massachusetts Council on Aging.

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in programs across the spectrum, with eighty-six different programs offered in 2016. Between programs and services, including transportation, COA had approximately 19,000 contacts in 2016.

The COA serves as a field-training site for students from UMASS Boston, UMASS Lowell, Northeastern, Simmons College, Emerson College, Salem State University, and Regis College. Undergraduate and graduate students have participated in program planning, implementation of programs and services, home visits, and health clinics. COA will continue to serve as a supervising site for these educational institutions, which enable COA to reach more seniors.

Transportation within the COA is a very active component of COA's services. There were 6,084 rides provided for 121 unique riders. The Van operation utilizes a number of resources including volunteers to meet the needs of the seniors in Arlington. As an enterprise fund, the COA Van Transportation is dependent upon grants from The Trustees of the Symmes Hospital and CDBG allocations; however, both grantors reduced their grants by \$7,000 collectively in 2016, which resulted in COA eliminating Friday van service. Transportation is a critical component of COA's mission as it helps reduce isolation by providing a means to be actively engaged in COA programs and the community. Further, transportation reduces barriers related to access to health care. There are three options seniors have access to: the COA Van, Dial-A-Ride Taxi, and Medical Escort.

Volunteers participate in daily operations providing over 10,000 hours of service per year and volunteers remain a vital support to the organization offering support in key areas such as administrative support, program development, program operations, medical escort, and annual programs such as the Thanksgiving Day Meal delivery and the Holiday Stocking program through the Friends of Arlington COA make reaching our goals possible. The COA staff is beyond grateful to the many hands and hours these outstanding volunteers contribute to the mission of the COA. Volunteers are honored for their service at an annual luncheon.

The Senior Center also hosts Minuteman Senior Services which operates the "Eating Together" Meal site at the Senior Center and provides home-delivered "Meals-on-Wheels."

2016 COA Highlights

Received a \$32,500 grant from the Elizabeth and George L. Sanborn Foundation for the Treatment and Cure for Cancer, Inc. to provide rides to seniors for cancer treatments.

- Received a \$13,000 grant from the Symmes Hospital Funding for Medical Transportation to supplement the COA Van budget to provide seniors rides to medical appointments. The represents a \$2,000 reduction from

previous years.

- Received over \$14,000 in mini-grants from the Friends of the Arlington Council on Aging to support health and wellness programs, social functions, and emergency financial assistance for the benefit of Arlington Seniors.
- Developed and implemented the Arlington Memory Café to provide programming for seniors with cognitive decline.
- Individual contacts increased by 10, however, multiple contacts through services and programs increased by 25%.
- Added four new intergenerational programs, two of which are with Arlington Girls and Boys Club.

Community Partnering Efforts

Partnering with municipal and community organizations create productive relationships and more efficient means to deliver programs and services helping us to meet the mission of the COA. Minuteman Senior Services serves as our Aging Service Access Point (ASAP) and provides SHINE counselors and two congregate meal sites. The COA would be limited in program support and selection without the AARP Tax Service, Arlington Recreation Department (Walk the Rink), Arlington Boys and Girls Club (Intergenerational), Arlington Community Education (Program offerings), BrightView of Arlington (Memory Café), Retired Men's Club & Bateman Catering (Thanksgiving Meal), Lahey Clinic and Medical Hospital (Farmers Market for fifty seniors and the Diabetes Management Program), Enhance Asian Community on Health, Inc. for cultural enrichment and outreach to the mandarin Chinese seniors, LGBT Aging Project, and the Friends of Arlington Council on Aging through their gifts toward programs and services.

Organizations such as AARP and SHINE provide free tax preparation and health insurance guidance while Sean Condon, Rick Fenton and Noreen Murphy continue to donate their time monthly providing free consultation on long term care, financial matters and elder law issues respectively.

The COA appreciates the support from the Arlington Schools. The Arlington High School Football team provided free fall cleanup to twenty-four households. The Ottoson Middle School, under the LINKS Program, assisted seniors with shoveling and light outside tasks as well as providing technology workshops for seniors. The Bishop, Brackett, and St. Agnes elementary schools designed and provided Thanksgiving and holiday cards for more than 130 seniors. My Place To Grow and ABC Pre-School periodically entertained seniors at the Senior Center. This multigenerational relationship benefits both seniors and youth in Town.

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VETERANS' SERVICES



Benefits are available through the state (Chapter 115) and from federal agencies (Veterans' Administration). State benefits are income based and provide financial and medical assistance for veterans and dependents. Additional services for food, shelter, clothing and housing are available. Bonuses and annuities are available to veterans that provided wartime service to our nation. Annuity payments are provided to 100% service connected disabled veterans and Gold Star survivors. Support services are provided for educational benefits, employment benefits and housing services. Support services are also provided for military funerals.

Historical data has shown a consistent number of veterans/dependents seeking Chapter 115 Benefits. It is important to note these benefits extend to surviving spouses; therefore, Veterans' Services does not anticipate any appreciable decrease in the number of cases.

Per the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) statistics, the number of active cases (veterans/dependents currently receiving Chapter 115 benefits) is fifty-six cases. It is important to note that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts reimburses Arlington a minimum of 75% of all approved expenditures for Chapter 115 Veteran Benefits. All requests for emergency services as well as other special services are reimbursed at 100%.

Commemorative ceremonies were conducted for Memorial Day and Veterans Day. For Memorial Day, Veterans Services decorated over 5,500 veterans' graves at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery and St. Paul's Cemetery with flags.

Veteran Administration (VA) Claims

In addition to the state level benefits discussed above, the Director assists veterans and dependents in filing applications seeking federal service connected disability compensation and non-service connected compensation. Additionally, Veterans' Services provides support and direction to veterans seeking a variety of federal VA services.

According to the most recent VA report from October 2015, Arlington has 289 veterans/dependants receiving VA funds for compensation or pensions. The total annual amount received is \$317,463 (\$26,455.25 per month). All federal VA funds are tax-free and these funds are infused back into the local economy. Since the October 2015 VA report, Veterans' Services has processed an additional forty-eight claims for VA compensation or pensions.

2016 Veterans Services Highlights

- Completion of the largest GIS mapping project in Arlington's history. This was a two-phased project to satellite map and then mark all veteran burial lots at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery as part of the Memorial Day, Flags on Graves Program. This process reduced the amount of time needed to place flags on graves from weeks to days. This also allows for participation from civic groups and organizations to assist with flag placement, not previously possible.
- The final Veterans Burial Lot at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery was dedicated during the annual Memorial Day ceremony. This lot was dedicated to veterans serving in the "Global War on Terrorism" era. All fundraising efforts were managed by the Veterans Council, which raised more than \$9,500 in private funds to pay for the monument and beautification of the burial lot.
- The Director serves as Chairman of the Veterans Council along with six other members. The Council focuses on addressing current issues related to veteran memorials, the review and development of policies pertaining to Arlington veterans, and new projects to promote Arlington and their veterans.
- The Memorial Day ceremony was conducted in Town Hall. This was a change from previous years, enabling a larger number of veterans to attend, providing shelter from the weather and seating for all veterans and attendees. The Veterans Day parade and ceremony was conducted at Monument Square.
- The Director continues to provide contributory support to the Town of Winchester under a temporary agreement to provide services.
- The Director was re-elected as a member of the Executive Board for the Massachusetts Veterans Service Officers Association. He serves as Sergeant-At-Arms, and as a member on the Training Committee.

COMMISSION ON DISABILITY

In its twenty-third year of service, the Commission on Disability provided information, referral, guidance, and technical assistance to Arlington officials, residents, public and private agencies, and others to ensure that people with physical, sensory, cognitive, mental illnesses, and other disabilities have equal access to Town facilities, services, and programs.

As mandated by State law, the majority of Commissioners have a disability. The mandate brings an intimate and informed understanding of disabilities to the Commission's agenda and ultimate decisions. The Commission continues to bring awareness to Arlington

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policy makers and other residents as to the legal rights of people with disabilities, enforcing those rights and working towards community inclusion to make Arlington a stronger town by capitalizing on the strengths that each person living and working in Town has to offer.

2016 Commission on Disability Highlights

- The Commission held several workshops with business owners to discuss the need for increased handicapped parking spaces along Massachusetts Avenue. Based on the workshop feedback, the Commission recommended and the Board of Selectman ultimately approved, twenty seven additional handicap spaces on Massachusetts Ave, twelve of which were added in 2016 with the remainder to be added before July 2017.
- The Commission co-sponsored the eighth annual Diversity Career Fair at Arlington Town Hall. Twenty-seven employers from health care, financial, retail, and non-profit organizations participated in the career fair.
- The Commission had two booths at Town Day 2016. One booth was available to answer questions and provide resources about disability legislation. The other booth provided an educational puppet troupe for the purpose of teaching children about various disabilities and educational and medical differences. The puppet troupe used frank and often humorous communication of facts and feeling between the puppet characters and individuals, mostly children that attended the booth.
- Through Community Development Block Grant funding, the Commission identified, and DPW installed sixty-one curb cut ramps in 2016, bringing the total curb cut ramps installed since 2010 to 564.
- The Commission reviewed and issued recommendations on several variance requests that had been submitted by developers to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board and also reviewed seven application for accessibility compliance submitted by restaurants requesting outside dining permits.
- The Commission continued to meet with Town Officials to discuss the rights of people with disabilities in order to work towards full community inclusion within the Town of Arlington.
- The Commission worked with the True Story Theatre, which promotes social healing by inviting individuals to share their stories and then spontaneously transforming them into theatre. Commission members told stories

from their lives and watched them enacted on the spot by True Story. The Commission worked with the True Story Theatre to discuss and identify through theatre, challenges faced by individuals with visible and invisible disabilities.

- The Commission met with the Director of Planning and Community Development to discuss accessibility improvement in removing bricks in the circular driveway and entrance to the Senior Center at 27 Maple Street and replacing the bricks with a smoother, safer surface.
- The Commission had a display table at the Robbins Library for the purpose of providing information on disability and also for displaying recommended books pertaining to disabilities.

The Commission meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the conference room of the Housing and Disability Program Office located at 20 Academy Street Suite 203, Arlington (Senior Center). Meetings are open to the public and residents are invited to attend to observe or voice their opinion.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

The Arlington Human Rights Commission (AHRC) was created by Town Meeting in 1993 to advance issues related to the fair and equal treatment of individuals and to create a mechanism for addressing complaints arising out of these issues. The mission of AHRC is to work individually and collaboratively with other groups in our community to celebrate the ever-changing tapestry of our Town, and to emphasize, through educational outreach, the danger of intolerance at every level. The Town Manager, School Committee, and the Town Moderator have appointing authority for thirteen members of the commission. AHRC met monthly throughout the year.

During the course of the year, the Commission presented or co-sponsored several events:

A booth at Town Day received many visitors.

The Commission continued its collaboration with local nonprofit organization True Story Theater (TST) and developed three events with a focus on LGBTQ+ issues, two of which were co-presented this year with the third event planned for 2017. Video from one of the events is available on ACMI's website. The Commission also co-sponsored TST's events developed with other groups including Being an Active Bystander training, an interactive event to teach people how to diffuse situations in which someone is being discriminated against or harassed.

The Commission co-presented with Facing History and Ourselves, a community dialogue about Building

an Inclusive and Welcoming Community.

In response to a 2014 citizen request, the Commission conducted a needs assessment survey regarding LGBTQ+ issues. A subset of the survey questions was included in the Town's Vision 2020 mailing to reach a wider audience. Over 350 responses were received in 2016 and the Commission will analyze the responses in 2017.

The Commission published four guest commentaries in *The Advocate* and issued two joint statements with APD addressing equality and diversity issues.

The Commission co-sponsored and promoted relevant events by other local groups including the MLK Committee, League of Women Voters, and the Diversity Task Group.

A commissioner was an invited speaker at the unveiling of Inside OUT Ottoson, an art project developed in response to racist and anti-Semitic graffiti at the school.

Liaisons continued between the Commission and each of Arlington's public schools and METCO. A commissioner also attends monthly meetings of the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Committee. The Commission also helped to sponsor a Facing Racism retreat for Arlington High students and offered to reimburse transportation costs for METCO students.

In response to a 2014 citizen request, the Commission established a joint subcommittee with the Arlington School Committee to investigate allegations of racial bias in school discipline. The conclusion of the Joint Subcommittee of the Arlington School Committee and Arlington Human Rights Commission is that, while there is a higher rate of suspension for students of color than white students, it is similar to the rates seen in comparable communities. The number of students from group homes located in Arlington that were suspended contributed to the higher proportion of suspended students of color. These students most often arrive in Arlington with serious social and emotional needs. Arlington Public Schools has in place a program that supports and educates students from group homes in their transition to Arlington High School. Since the implementation of the program, the number of out of school suspensions has decreased.

AHRC continued to lead the Response Coordination Team (RCT), which developed a protocol for responding to hate incidents or crimes. RCT comprises Superintendent of Schools Kathy Bodie, Selectman Steven Byrne, Reverend Christine Elliott, Public Information Officer Joan Roman, APD Chief Frederick Ryan, Diversity Task Group's Miriam Stein, and Reverend David Swaim.

The Commission submitted three Warrant Articles for the April Town Meeting: (i) to amend the Town bylaws to allow AHRC to have co-chairs at its discretion, (ii) to make having an executive director optional and at the

Commission's discretion, and (iii) to expand equal protection from discrimination to include gender identity or expression. Commissioners attended Board of Selectmen meetings and precinct meetings to answer questions about its three Warrant Articles and to increase awareness of AHRC's mission. All passed unanimously at Town Meeting.

The Commission spearheaded training for commissioners and Town and school personnel on transgender issues. The Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition conducted the training for approximately thirty people. Attendance included representatives from many Town offices, including the Board of Selectmen, the Arlington Police Department (APD), the Council on Aging, and Human Resources.

The Commission collaborated with the Town Manager to gather documentation in response to an evaluation of the Town's LGBTQ+ inclusion conducted by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation in partnership with the Equality Federation Institute, which significantly raised the Town's final Municipal Equality Index score. The Commission will work with the Town Manager in 2017 to implement improvements to address deficiencies identified in the report.

Incident and Complaints

The Commission received one formal complaint, which fell outside its time limitation period. It fielded a number of inquiries from concerned citizens that did not result in formal complaints. The Commission collected information regarding hate incidents occurring in Town from citizens and the APD, as follows:

- Complaints of Tagging/Graffiti of hate messages: 2
- Other Hate Incidents: 8
- Defacement/vandalism of Black Lives Matter signs: 6

In July, a group of forty residents attend a commission meeting to discuss an incident involving a Swastika painted on the garage of an African-American family, a spate of other recent hate incidents, and how the community can respond appropriately. Ideas from the meeting will be incorporated in planning for the upcoming *Arlington for All* project. The Commission continues to work with the Police and the Schools to learn of, track and, where necessary, address incidents involving graffiti, texting, racist and anti-Semitic speech and threats, and racial profiling.